

## **TRANSPORTATION PROPOSAL**

OVERVIEW: Doug Ramp, constituent and mental health services consumer has met with Dean Settle (Director, Community Mental Health Center), Brian Mathers (Director, Lincoln Action Program), and Deb Daily (Center for People in Need) to discuss the challenges he's experienced with transportation in Lincoln. With the support of these agencies, Doug seeks a forum to express his needs and seek solutions.

### **NEED**

Many hundreds of Lincoln residents with needs similar to Doug's are reliant upon public transportation to meet their needs. For most, the city's bus services are inadequate.

Populations impacted include:

- Persons with disabilities and mental illness
- Senior citizens
- Low income persons and the working poor

The system's inadequacies include poor reliability in scheduling, limited routes, cumbersome and time-consuming connections, no evening and weekend hours, and unaffordable (for some) rates.

These shortcomings impact this population's ability to fully participate in work, education, rehabilitation, medical appointments, church, support groups, shopping, recreation and other positive activities. For many persons like Doug, an active involvement in community activities is a vital component of recovery and maintaining stability in the community. The alternative to having transportation to participate in events is too often to remain at home in increasing isolation, loneliness, and depression.

### **PROPOSAL**

Mr. Ramp is aware that the City has long considered strategies to improve public transportation in Lincoln. The period for consideration, in his view, is becoming over-long, and some immediate solutions are needed. While the city considers long term plans they might consider short term strategies to be quickly implemented:

- Taxi vouchers for qualified persons from the target populations
- Reconfiguration of the transit grid with more point to point shorter routes, and fewer "connection-reliant" routes
- Free or reduced-cost bus and taxi fares
- Smaller, more versatile fleet of Startran vehicles

### **ACTION STEP**

The needs and proposals identified should be presented to persons in city government with the obligation and authorization to act. This constituent and the agencies supporting him seek a forum to make this presentation. Doug's story is compelling and his voice is eloquent to speak to the needs. He can be contacted at 742-5340 and would appreciate hearing from elected officials who could offer an avenue to proceed.